

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, we've bailed out Wall Street once already this year. We may be doing it again soon. But it's time to bail out Main Street by doing what we should have done 50 years ago, and that is provide Americans with universal health care. It's the fastest and most effective way Congress can shore up the American family. Because we all know that Americans are either paying too much for health care, can't afford to buy enough coverage, or can't afford any coverage at all. And the cost in dollars and in human terms is staggering.

A generation ago, the head of General Motors famously said, "as GM goes, so goes the Nation." It's no secret that GM and America are struggling with an economic crisis. We can make the difference by addressing the single largest expense facing an American family and American business today, health care. Every day in America, the American people are forced to dig deeper and deeper into their own pockets to pay for health care. And every day American business is forced to transfer more of the burden to employees or drop coverage altogether.

America's health care system today looks like an ambulance riding on one wheel. And even that wheel will soon fall off if we continue to support a failed system that is not made in America, not worthy of America and nothing more than an accident of history.

In the early 20th century, there was a movement to provide universal health care. But ironically it was fiercely opposed by the insurance industry at a time when it made most of its money selling death benefits to those who feared a pauper's grave. Emerging from the Great Depression in 1930, Franklin Delano Roosevelt wanted to institute universal health care. But his advisers feared the American Medical Association would kill FDR's proposal for Social Security in their opposition to health care.

In the 1950s, the legendary labor leader, Walter Reuther, first won a health care benefit and a pension too for automobile workers in a labor agreement with General Motors. Then Reuther tried to enlist GM and others to join forces and lobby the Federal Government to institute universal health care. But business couldn't see coming the economic storm from global competition and didn't trust government. Organized labor, flush from a victory in Detroit, saw health care as a perpetual win at the bargaining table, and organized medicine was relentless at lobbying until they drove the universal health care program into the ditch again.

In the second half of the 20th century, there were other attempts by the American leaders, but all of them were killed by seemingly unlimited lobbying resources. Today we have 50 million Americans with no health care coverage at all, another 25 million Americans without adequate protection, and

every American can't find pants with pockets deep enough to keep paying costs that are already out of sight.

The only universal truth about health care in America today is that every single American knows someone with a health care crisis or is facing one themselves. American business has to compete today in a global economy, but American business has a major health care benefit expense on its books that the international competitors do not have. Even great companies in my congressional district, which are national models to providing employee benefits like health care, are being stretched to the limit, and their balance sheets, like a rubber band, can only flex so much before they break.

We cannot stand idly by and watch when we know that developing and instituting an American single payer health care system can dramatically improve the health of American business and American families literally and financially. And for the first time in decades, we have a chance if we're willing to seize the opportunity. There are cracks in the dams of opposition. A new survey of U.S. doctors published recently in the *Annals of Health Research* finds that 59 percent of American doctors now support single payer health care plans, which is a dramatic double-digit increase in support in the last 7 years.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors passed a resolution a few weeks ago. Organized labor recognizes a changing global economy that means they can best represent workers not at one bargaining table, but on a national level where everyone benefits equally.

Even business is beginning to rethink its trust of government. In 2002, Detroit's auto subsidiaries in Canada strongly supported continuation of a single payer health care program because of its positive economic impact on them and their workers.

A few years ago, I asked businesses' executives if they would be willing to pay 6 percent of their revenue to off-load health care and no one raised their hand. Now the average cost is 13 percent for business, and a business leader recently asked me if that deal was still on the table. I'm here to say single payer is on the table. It's time to breach the dam of opposition and create a single payer health care system for the health and well-being of the American people and American business.

We have tried the alternatives. The free enterprise system has had 50 years. But they can't do it. They have failed again and again, and the costs go up all the time. It's time to do what works in every industrialized country in the world.

□ 1930

HONORING SENATOR JESSE HELMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from North Carolina (Mr. McHENRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. McHENRY. Mr. Speaker, this evening, I rise with a heavy heart to honor the life of former Senator Jesse Alexander Helms, Jr., of North Carolina. Senator Helms served from 1972 to 2002, 30 years in the United States Senate, tying the longest-serving Senator from North Carolina in that record.

Senator Helms was known to most Americans as a rock-rib conservative, both committed to a smaller, more efficient government that taxes less and spends less, and also a social conservative who would stand up to the common society of the day that was allowing for many permissive activities.

Senator Helms was much more than that, though. He was an ardent anti-communist, and supported freedom around the world against the tyranny of communism. Senator Helms has a very distinguished record in the United States Senate spanning three decades.

He was known as the strongest conservative in the United States Senate in his time, one of the best known American conservatives of his time. But what many people don't realize is that in 1976, just 4 years into his first term in the United States Senate, Senator Helms did a very bold thing, he endorsed Governor Ronald Reagan in his primary for President against Gerald Ford. Senator Helms was the only Senator to endorse Reagan in 1976.

Although then-Governor Reagan had not won any primaries coming into the North Carolina primary, Senator Helms put his full campaign organization behind Governor Reagan. And in an upset victory, Governor Reagan beat sitting President Gerald Ford in that Republican primary, the first primary that Reagan won in 1976.

Historians note that without winning the North Carolina primary, Ronald Reagan may not have had the opportunity to be President in 1980. He may not have had the ability to continue his campaign going into the convention in 1976. So for Americans who know Reagan, they should thank Senator Helms and his bold move in endorsing Governor Reagan.

Beyond that, in his final term in office, the world came to him. He didn't change his principles, he didn't change the things that he was focused on, but he took the opportunity to reform the U.N., working with Senator JOE BIDEN of Delaware. The Helms-Biden agreement called on the U.N. to reduce its budget and define its mission. It also forced a much-needed review of all U.N. policies. It was a large reform, and Senator BIDEN said at the time, "Just as only Nixon could go to China, only Helms could fix the U.N."

Just after that in 2000, Helms was the first U.S. lawmaker to address the U.N. Security Council. That is an amazing tribute to his leadership. He was not simply "Senator No," he was voted as the "Nicest Lawmaker in Congress."

What people know about him was the personal touch he had with people. My

first political memory was in 1984 as a 9-year-old going to a Helms-Reagan rally. That is my first political memory. Beyond that when I was a high school student, I stopped into Jesse Helms' office and he took a few minutes to sit and talk with me, take a picture with me at his desk, and showed me around his office. And I realized once I became a lawmaker how very short time is here on Capitol Hill, and for him to give me that moment is a special memory that I will always cherish.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the Helms family, and his wife, Dot.

At this time I yield to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HAYES).

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of attending Senator Helms' funeral along with Congressman MCHENRY, Congressman JONES, Senator BIDEN, Senator DODD, Senator BYRD, Senator DOLE, and others. And there were two takeaways from that funeral that I particularly remember. One was directly from Senator Helms. He said, "You can always change your priorities, but never change your principle." That was a hallmark.

The other thing that the pastor said, "The Lord always examines the heart of the giver before he examines the gift." Senator Helms' heart was with his constituents. His constituent service, regardless of party, was absolutely remarkable, and it was a tribute to him, his relationship with his wife, Dot, his family and his children.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Senator MCCONNELL and Jimmy Broughton and the Helms family for the wonderful testimonial of his service to his country.

EDUCATING IRAQ'S FUTURE LEADERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, most of our Nation's students are on summer vacation right now. They are enjoying camp, swimming, playing, or just hanging out and relaxing. Some are even earning a few dollars at a summer job.

For their counterparts in Iraq, the school break is just now beginning. Iraqi students have just wrapped up their final exams. This year we learned was very different from last year's exam period. According to reports from relief organizations and a recent article in the Christian Science Monitor, last year's tests were marred by unprecedented incidents of mass cheating, bribe-taking, and sheer lawlessness. In many places, Mr. Speaker, last year we heard that militiamen and insurgents strolled casually into exam centers and forced officials, often at gun point, to allow cheating.

Parents feared sending their children to exams. The challenges of just getting to school, making it past militia roadblocks and suicide attackers was

one thing; making it through a day full of cheating, intimidation and violence was quite another. One test proctor overseeing a geography high school exam at Baghdad University told the Christian Science Monitor, "Last year the outlaws took advantage of the brittle security situation and caused unprecedented chaos during the final exams. It was truly a mark of utter shame on our education system as a whole."

Another Iraqi reported that militiamen stormed into an exam hall to force proctors to let students cheat. When one headmaster objected, he was briefly kidnapped and threatened by the militiamen until he relented.

Students were woefully underprepared for their exams, Mr. Speaker. One observer told the media that anguished-looking girls came out of the exam room complaining not only about how difficult the questions were, but also about their preparation. They said it is not fair, we didn't even have a chemistry teacher all year, and we are being tested on chemistry.

This year, thankfully, it appears that the neighborhoods are much more secure. An overwhelming presence of military and law enforcement appears to have kept interfering forces at bay during the testing. The situation is still not ideal, however, because many students have to travel great distances daily. But generally, the situation is somewhat, if not a great deal, better.

Iraq has a rich educational history, Mr. Speaker. Until the years of the first Gulf War, Iraq led the region in academics and produced internationally recognized leaders in the fields of law, medicine and theology. But the challenges are still great.

The Ministry of Human Rights reported at the end of June that 340 academics were killed in and around Iraq from 2005 to 2007. And according to the Ministry of Education, 28 percent of Iraq's 17 year olds in the center and southern part of the country took their final exams in the year 2007, but only 40 percent passed. That was a decrease from 2006 when the figure was 60 percent passing.

We already know that this administration gets a failing grade on its Iraq policy. However, we don't need to condemn a generation of Iraq's future leaders. We should be investing in schools, not in tanks and guns. We must redeploy our troops and military contractors from Iraq, and we must work peacefully to help with their reconciliation. Mr. Speaker, let's send the children to school, not to war.

EARMARK LIMITATION AMENDMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, every year now we hear a lot of high-minded rhetoric about earmarks and how earmarks

represent Congress' Article I authority, that we earmark in Congress because we have the power of the purse and we are simply exercising that power.

But the reality belies that claim. Let me talk about one earmark tonight that will give just an example of how this high-minded rhetoric that we often hear is so wrong.

We may not even get appropriation bills on the floor this year. We may not have any. It may be that we simply do a continuing resolution to fund appropriations for the next fiscal year; and then in January have a big omnibus bill and all of the earmarks, the thousands that have been put as part of the bill that we haven't even seen on the House floor, will be dumped into the bill.

So all we can do, I guess, is come to the floor in a forum like this when we are not even officially challenging the earmarks, but to highlight what a waste some of these earmarks are.

This earmark that I want to talk about tonight is \$200,000 in funding for the Advantage West Economic Development Group's Certified Entrepreneurial Community Program in North Carolina. There are a number of earmarks similar to this in the Labor-HHS bill which we won't see later this year. These are funds set aside for economic development, business incubators and workforce programs.

I would never argue, nor would any of us in our campaign literature, that this is a proper role and function of government. Yet we see time and again earmark after earmark to fund these kinds of programs.

This is not the first time I have challenged an earmark for this specific group. In fact, last year I came to the floor and argued that this group need not have Federal funds to carry out its objective. I say this because Advantage West Economic Development Group's Website has a long list of corporate sponsors, including BB&T, BellSouth, Qualcomm, Sprint, UBS, Verizon and Wachovia. In addition to more than 80 corporate sponsors listed, the group also counts the National Park Service, National Endowment for the Arts and the U.S. Department of Commerce as "funding partners."

On top of that, the group received a \$282,000 earmark in last year's appropriation bill.

So why in the world, Mr. Speaker, with so much financial support coming here should this group receive an additional subsidy? It simply makes no sense at all.

I think that we ought to mention here, as was mentioned in the July 9 issue of Roll Call, that we often hear that earmarks are given out because Members know their districts much better than faceless bureaucrats in some department.

□ 1945

But why is it, then, if there is such a noble purpose for earmarks, and the Members are simply knowing their district and getting these districts, why is